Underweight and anaemic infants

2078. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to a survey conducted under the stewardship of his Ministry 83 per cent infants of six months to three years in Haryana and 80 per cent of the infants in Punjab are anaemic;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in Punjab 37 per cent of the children under 5 are stunted, one in ten are wasted and almost one fourth are underweight; and

(c) what steps are being taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) According to the National Family Health Survey 3(2005-06), 72 and 66 percent of infants in the age group of 6-59 months are anaemic in the states of Hayana and Punjab, respectively. Among the children under the age of five years in Punjab, 37 percent are stunted, 9 percent are wasted and 25 percent are underweight.

(c) The Government of India is implementing the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme through State Governments/UT Administrations. The scheme provides a package of six services namely supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services, pre-school non-formal education and nutrition and health education. To address the problem of malnutrition and ensure effective implementation of the scheme, the Government has recently Universalised the Scheme with special focus on SC/ST and minority habitations, revised the cost norms as well as the Nutritional and Feeding norms of the Supplementary Nutrition Component of ICDS. The Food and Nutrition Board (FNB) through its 43 field extension units also provides wide range of Nutrition Education and Training programmes with the objective of overcoming the difficult barrier of ignorance, prejudice and superstition.

Government is implementing a number of other schemes throughout the country, which directly or indirectly affect the nutritional status of children. These are as follows:

- Reproductive and Child Health Programme and National Iodine Deficiency Disease Control programme under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,
- Vitamin A and IFA supplementation,
- Mid-day meal programme of Department of Elementary Education and Literacy,
- Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls and Kishori Shakti Yojna of Ministry of Women and Child Development,
- Availability of essential food items at subsidized cost through Targeted Public Distribution System and Antodaya Anna Yojna by Department of Food and Consumer affairs.